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| From:  | Darcy Walsh, Canadian Chair and General Manager, Ottawa – Edelman Global Advisory |
| Date:  | Monday, February 14, 2022                                                         |
| Topic: | Update on Freedom Convoy Protests Across Canada                                   |

### **PROTESTS ACROSS CANADA**

Protesters seeking to end COVID-19 vaccine mandates and other public health measures demonstrated for a third weekend in Ottawa and in a number of cities across the country.

The “Freedom Convoy” began in Ottawa on January 29, 2022 and has inspired similar protests across Canada, including blockades at Canada-U.S. border crossings.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau met with his cabinet and the Incident Response Group (IRG) to discuss ongoing security and policing concerns at various blockades and protest locations across Canada.

After a successful weekend of removing protesters at the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor Ontario, the bridge has fully reopened to traffic as of earlier this morning, February 14, restoring the vital Canada-U.S. trade link. The bridge sees over 40,000 commuters, tourists and truck drivers cross each day and trade values totaling \$323M daily.

Later today, Trudeau will convene his caucus and cabinet to further discuss ongoing blockades and occupations across the country.

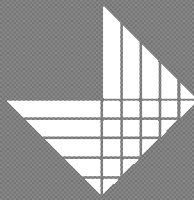
### **Emergencies Act**

On Sunday, Minister of Emergency Preparedness Bill Blair said that the federal government is prepared to invoke the *Emergencies Act* to end the convoy protests and blockades across the country. The *Emergencies Act* authorizes Parliament to take special temporary measures to ensure safety and security during national emergencies. This is a significant step that could ultimately lead to intervention by the Canadian Armed Forces should the Prime Minister and federal government decide.

### **ONTARIO**

On Friday, February 11, Premier Doug Ford declared a state of emergency in Ontario in response to the convoy protests against COVID-19 vaccine mandates and public health measures. Premier Ford stated that he will enact legal orders to make it clear that it is illegal and punishable by law to block and impede the movement of goods, people, and services along critical infrastructure.

Fines for non-compliance have a maximum penalty of \$100,000 and up to a year imprisonment. The government of Ontario will also provide additional authority to consider taking away the personal and commercial licenses of anyone who does not comply with these measures.



Premier Ford stated that these measures are temporary, but the government plans to bring new legislation forward to make them permanent in law.

### **Ottawa Convoy and Counter Protest at Lansdowne Park**

Over the weekend protests in Ottawa's downtown core continued for a 17th day with approximately 4,000 demonstrators on Wellington Street, in front of Parliament and the Prime Minister's Office. Demonstrators have setup tents, a stage, a large video screen, and a hot tub. The protest has become more of a party for some of the people assembled. Local police are vastly outnumbered by protesters.

On Saturday, a group of protesters and veterans took down a fence that had been put up around the National War Memorial to protect it from further damages. The fence was first installed after multiple incidents were reported of protesters urinating on the site and dancing on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

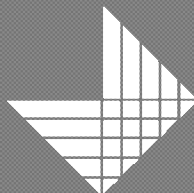
In response to the occupation occurring downtown, a group of 500 Ottawa residents gathered at Lansdowne Park, less than 5km away from Parliament Hill, to rally against the hundreds of trucks and other vehicles occupying and gridlocking the downtown core since January 28. Additionally, on February 13, at 9:00 AM roughly 30 residents stepped into the intersection at Bank Street and Riverside Drive to counter-protest and block convoy reinforcements.

Last week, an Ottawa judge granted a temporary injunction to silence honking truck horns at all hours for 10 days. The injunction covers the city's main east-west artery. Yesterday, the Ottawa Police Service claimed that it had a plan to end the occupation. Nearly a week ago the City of Ottawa requested 1,800 officers from the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to help local police manage the protests, however the full request has yet to be fulfilled. To date, 26 arrests have been made and over 1,500 tickets and by-law violations have been given out.

On Sunday, Mayor Jim Watson says an agreement has been reached with Freedom Convoy President Tamara Lich to remove trucks out of residential neighbourhoods by Monday February 14 at 12PM. Mayor Watson has asked organizers to limit the demonstration perimeter to Wellington Street, between Elgin Street and the Sir John A. Macdonald Parkway. Tamara Lich said she is working with truckers to move vehicles over the next 24 hours to ease pressure on downtown residents and businesses.

The mayor says he will meet with Lich and the organizers to discuss their concerns if they meet three conditions.

1. Remove all trucks from the residential districts south of Wellington Street, and from all other residential areas including the market, the Ottawa Baseball Stadium on Coventry, etc.;
2. Agree to not backfill the residential areas currently occupied with trucks, other vehicles and/or demonstrators; and
3. Agree to not displace the truck convoy, vehicles and/or demonstrators to other residential areas in the City of Ottawa.



To better coordinate policing efforts and respond to issues, Ottawa Police, the RCMP and the OPP have established a new Integrated Command Centre (ICC). Ottawa Police Chief Peter Slowly said, “the ICC will result in a significantly enhanced ability for police to respond to the current situation in the downtown core with the most effective use of police resources.”

### **Windsor - Ambassador Bridge**

Since Monday, February 7, protestors have gathered along the Ambassador Bridge, connecting Windsor, Ontario, and Detroit, Michigan, to protest COVID-19 vaccines, mandates, and other public health measures, effectively blocking Canada’s busiest crossing into the U.S.

On Friday, February 11, an Ontario Superior Court judge granted an injunction to end the blockade by protestors at the Ambassador Bridge. The injunction authorizes police or “designated agents” to remove any vehicles or objects that block access to the bridge and approaching roadways.

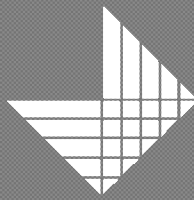
On February 12, 200 protestors gathered near the bridge. Police began moving in on protestors by creating a line backed up by two armored RCMP vehicles and several cruisers. Some RCMP officers carrying guns were on standby, and tactical teams and snipers were also present. It forced protestors away from the bridge, but authorities hit a stand-still when they came face-to-face with hundreds more demonstrators. Police halted their advance by late afternoon. Protestors closest to the bridge were seen moving back peacefully and vacating, however, other protestors either in trucks or on foot were unwilling to leave.

On February 13, police surrounded the remaining protestors, 25 people were taken into custody and several vehicles were towed from the roadway. Windsor Mayor Drew Dilkens said police hope to have the Ambassador Bridge open by first thing Monday morning. Mayor Dilkens said authorities were working to establish “a safe and secure link” between the bridge and Huron Church Road which leads to the border crossing.

As of Monday morning, all lanes of the Ambassador bridge were re-opened to traffic.

### **Toronto - Queen’s Park**

Hundreds of protestors gathered at Queen’s Park, the Ontario legislature, in downtown Toronto to protest the COVID-19 vaccine mandates and public health measures, in support of the demonstrations in Ottawa on February 12. Protesters were seen holding Canadian flags and signs reading “freedom”. Ahead of the protests, police blocked roads in the city’s downtown core including, Queen’s Park Circle to the north, Dundas Street West to the south, Bay Street to the east, and University Avenue to the west. Additionally, from 12:30 until 4:00 PM the Don Valley Parkway South at Richmond Street, and the Gardiner Expressway eastbound at Park Lawn Road were both closed.



### **Fort Erie - Peace Bridge**

A convoy of protestors drove toward the Peace Bridge, connecting Fort Erie, Ontario, and Buffalo, New York.

On the morning of February 12, police closed off lanes and blocked vehicles from driving down the Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW) towards the bridge to divert the protestors. As a result, the protestors avoided the closed-off lanes, and diverted their destination to driving around town instead. At the Peace Bridge, police kept one lane open for incoming traffic.

Hundreds of demonstrators drove their vehicles around Fort Erie for several hours honking their horns and making noise. Many stayed near Lakeshore Road, Niagara Boulevard and the Mather Arch. Additionally, roughly 70 people, including children, continued to the bridge by foot and walked onto the QEW as police stood by. Some adults tried to stop transport trucks and other vehicles from crossing into Canada.

On February 13, the Fort Erie-bound lanes of the QEW remain closed and have a handful of protestors stay near the Peace Bridge sitting in their vehicle. Transport trucks and non-commercial travelers continue to cross the bridge; however, pedestrians are currently not allowed across. To date, no charges have been laid.

### **Cornwall - Seaway International Bridge**

On February 12, around 50-100 demonstrators in tractors and pick-up trucks slowed traffic down near the Seaway International Bridge in Cornwall, connecting the City of Cornwall to Akwesasne. The bridge remained open throughout the day and no charges were laid.

### **Kingston**

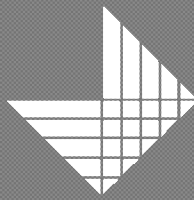
On February 12, around 1:00 PM a convoy of about 60 to 75 vehicles drove through Kingston, making its way to the downtown area. Small groups of counter-protestors temporarily blocked the convoy's path at various points along the route.

Meanwhile, in front of City Hall on Ontario Street, two large groups of about equal size gathered on separate sides of the street, blocking the roadway. On the west side of the road were mostly supporters of the convoy, and on the east side were mostly counter protestors. A few dozen police officers were on site to maintain the peace. By 3:30 PM Ontario Street was reopened to traffic.

## **ALBERTA**

### **Coutts – Port of Entry**

Since January 29, large trucks and other vehicles have been blocking traffic southbound on Highway 4 leading to the Canada-U.S. border.



Alberta Premier Jason Kenney said it is up to the RCMP to enforce the law at the blockade near Coutts. The RCMP have been trying to encourage protestors to move to a nearby field to open the road and have been issuing tickets to protestors illegally blocking the border.

On February 12, the Canada Border Services Agency said it is temporarily unable to provide services at the Coutts crossing due to the ongoing protest taking place nearby.

### **Edmonton**

For the third Saturday in a row, demonstrators have been protesting against COVID-19 vaccine mandates and restrictions in downtown Edmonton in front of the Alberta legislature. Close to 700 people marched along Jasper Avenue in downtown Edmonton. Some cars were stopped by a dozen counter-protesters on foot and on bikes.

On February 11, the City of Edmonton was granted an interim injunction, effective immediately until March 4, 2022, prohibiting protestors from incessant sound with horns and megaphones.

## **NOVA SCOTIA**

On March 22, 2020, the Government of Nova Scotia declared a provincial state of emergency in response to COVID-19. That state of emergency was most recently extended to February 20, 2022.

### **Halifax**

On February 12, 300 people gathered in an anti-restriction rally in the south end of Halifax. The crowd was significantly smaller than the event from the previous weekend. Several hundred vehicles drove through the downtown core.

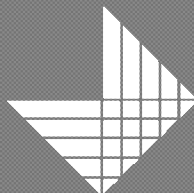
At the Nova Scotia – New Brunswick border, RCMP officers stopped vehicles to prevent the possibility of a border blockade. Additionally, Cape Breton Regional Police were dispatched to the ferry terminal in Sydney to prevent a blockade there.

## **PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND**

### **Charlottetown**

Described as a “slow roll”, 500-700 vehicles took part in a protest in downtown Charlottetown. Organizers had planned for the demonstration to start at 1:00PM, but traffic disruptions began as early as 11:30AM. Most of the vehicle traffic was comprised of cars and pickup trucks rather than big rigs.

Protesters came from Prince, Kings and Queen counties as well as the Milton area. The convoy’s endpoint was the Charlottetown Cenotaph. At the Cenotaph, a small group of counter protestors were present. A Charlottetown-area veteran also stood guard in front of the city’s cenotaph to ensure that nothing similar to the National War Memorial in Ottawa happened.



Former Liberal MLA Charlie McGeoghegan was one of the protestors and said that the demonstration was about “freedom”.

Sgt. Chris Gunn of the RCMP said that around 30 vehicles drove around Borden until 5:00PM but they did not block traffic or access to the Confederation Bridge.

Charlottetown Police were in contact with protest organizers who communicated planned routes and expected crowd size prior to the event. There were no incidents of violence during the protest.

## **NEW BRUNSWICK**

On February 12, New Brunswick amended its *Emergency Measures Act* in response to the convoy protest. The amendment prohibits blocking the normal flow of traffic on any road or highway, participating, or financing any interruption of the normal flow of traffic, and stopping or gathering with others along the side of any numbered highway.

Fines for non-compliance can be from \$3,000 to \$10,000 per offence and corporations can face fines ranging from \$20,000 to \$100,000. If convicted, a person’s driving privileges can also be suspended for up to 12 months.

### **Fredericton**

On February 11, a crowd of 300 protestors gathered around the province’s legislature. Routes into and out of the Fredericton downtown core were being controlled by the police. Truckers who were not going into the downtown core for business were turned away. Police had set up 15 roadblocks around the city to prevent trucks from entering.

By February 12, the number of protesters grew, and speeches continued in front of the legislature late into the afternoon. By 6:00PM the number of protestors had reduced by over half. Two men were arrested in the evening for unspecified Criminal Code violations.

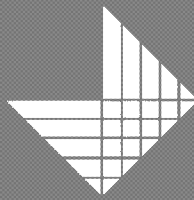
Fredericton Mayor Kate Rogers said that despite the large number of protesters on Saturday, the crowd remained peaceful. Rodgers anticipated based on prior communication by the protest organizers that they would return on Sunday for a final day of protests.

On Sunday, protester numbers shrunk to under 100 people by mid-afternoon. Local police officers continue to monitor the protests, which have been largely peaceful to date. An additional arrest was made Sunday morning for breaching the peace.

## **QUEBEC**

### **Montreal**

On February 12, roughly 4,000 protestors flooded the streets of Montreal in Villeray. Protestors from Montreal were joined by convoys from the Eastern Townships and Beauce before heading



to Ottawa on Saturday evening. **REDACTED**, Leader of the People's Party of Canada spoke in Jarry Park after the march, he called for the end of COVID-19 restrictions immediately. Additionally, a small group of counter protestors marched through Villeray.

Montreal police were on site for both marches and said that they were peaceful with no incidents of violence.

## **MANITOBA**

### **Winnipeg**

On February 12, several hundred demonstrators gathered at the Manitoba legislative building to counter-protest the ongoing anti-mandate protest that has been happening for over a week on Broadway and Memorial Avenue in solidarity with the "Freedom Convoy" protest in Ottawa. The group called Defend Winnipeg organized the counter-protest as a chance to "unite against a common threat which has involved our community and caused so much damage and harm."

The counter-protestors and the anti-mandate protestors did not have any confrontations, as both protests remained separated by the grounds of the legislature. No charges were laid during the events.

### **Emerson – Border Crossing**

Since Thursday, February 10, around 50 semi-trucks, farm equipment, snowplows, construction machinery, and passenger vehicles continue to block the Canada-U.S. border near Emerson. All four lanes of Highway 75 remain blocked and only emergency vehicles and some agriculture transports have been getting through. No tickets or arrests have been made.

RCMP Divisional Liaison Officers are working with protestors to reach a peaceful resolution.

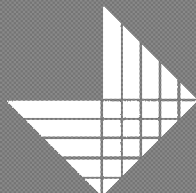
## **BRITISH COLUMBIA**

### **Vancouver**

On February 12, a convoy of protestors entered the Metro Vancouver area, with its endpoint identified as Surrey near the Pacific Highway truck crossing. According to Vancouver Police, the convoy split into multiple routes throughout the city and did not thin out until 6PM. Five arrests were also made on Saturday evening for mischief, arrests involved protestors and counter-protestors.

### **Surrey**

Following the route through Vancouver, the BC convoy made its way to Surrey's Pacific Highway in attempts to block the Canada – U.S. border. RCMP had set up barricades at the highway in order to prevent protestors from blocking the border, but at 2:00PM on February 12,



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several commercial trucks and a military-style vehicle broke through the barricade and hundreds of protesters began walking towards the border.

That evening, the RCMP in a news release said that they were working with provincial and federal RCMP units and the Canada Border Services Agency to resolve the situation.

On February 13, the RCMP announced that the border crossing is closed to the public and that the majority of protesters had dissipated on Saturday evening. The RCMP is continuing to monitor the small group that remains.

If you have any questions on this issue or would like to receive more insights, please reach out to our team.

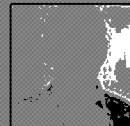


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